



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



APRIL IS MONTH OF MILITARY CHILD

April marks the nation's "Month of the Military Child," a time to honor military youth in communities who have been impacted by deployments, as well as the unique opportunities and challenges that all military children face.

The South Dakota National Guard invites everyone to join in and be part of "Purple Up! For Military Kids Day," on April 8.

South Dakotans are encouraged to wear purple on that date and share their photos through social media as a tangible way to show their support and thank all military children for their strength and sacrifices.

"This is a perfect time to celebrate military children and to recognize their character, strength and resilience," said Taryn Broomfield, SDNG Child and Youth Program lead coordinator. "Our military youth are impacted daily, whether their service member is home, deployed, at drill, or away attending training or school."

There are more than 6,400 military children in South Dakota with parents or guardians who serve in the SDNG, Ellsworth Air Force Base, and other Reserve and active-duty components. Of these children, over 3,800 are affiliated with the SDNG.

Gov. Kristi Noem demonstrated her support of military kids by signing a proclamation announcing April 2022 as the Month of the Military Child.

Established by Casper Weinberger in 1986, the Month of the Military Child recognizes the important role military children play in our communities. We pause each year to honor the millions of military children for their contributions to their families.

"Military kids are an integral part of our families and communities, and they serve too," said Broomfield. "Please celebrate the military children in your life and thank them."

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PURPLE UP!
for military kids

SDDVA STAFF CHANGES

No, it's not an early April Fools joke! Unfortunately, change is inevitable, whether we like it or not.

SDDVA Program Manager Heather Bullerman has tendered her resignation with the Department and has accepted a position with the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. This change will afford Heather less travel time to and from work and more family time.

Heather has been a great asset to the Department. She encompassed reliability, dependability, dedication, productivity, character, integrity, professionalism, and determination. And with those attributes, she instilled in her team the need to always advocate for the veterans and their families. We are proud of all that she accomplished for SDDVA and for our veterans. She definitely made an exemplary contribution to the state of South Dakota. We wish her the best as she grows with her new journey.

As with all staff departures, it's a great time to step back and review what we are doing and improve on any opportunities there might be. Brett Dickerson has been selected to serve as the new program manager. As such, he will now oversee both the claims office and the field service officers. His leadership and guidance will help the Department further develop cohesiveness and teamwork between these two sections.

In addition to Bullerman's departure, Cody Trapp will also be leaving the claims office. He has accepted a position with MEPS.

Best of luck to Heather, Brett, and Cody as they embark on new chapters of their lives.



ROBERTS COUNTY OUTREACH HONORS VIETNAM VETERANS

Roberts County Veterans Service Officer Angela Bea-com hosted an honoring celebration for Vietnam Veterans on March 22.

Congressman Johnson joined the event and presented Vietnam Veterans with memorial pins.

SDDVA Field Service Officer Guy Arnold participated in the celebration.



SDDVA OFFERS TRAINING FOR NEW CTVSOS

SDDVA hosted a three-day training conference for new county and tribal veterans service officers March 23-25 in Sioux Falls.

With 20 participants attending, SDDVA's team of Krystal Taylor, Brett Dickerson and Heather Bullerman provided training on TRIP program, PIV cards, the SDDVA website and tools, confidentiality, VetraSpec, uploading files, VA computer programs, the cycle of a claim, ITFs, compensation, pension, burial benefits, CHAMPVA, education, appeals, VA healthcare, interview techniques, and state benefits and services.

SDDVA's next training opportunity is May 10-12, when we will be hosting mini conferences in Rapid City, Pierre and Brookings.



MCDONOUGH STATEMENT ON FY2023 BUDGET

The Biden-Harris administration submitted to Congress the president's budget for fiscal year 2023. This budget delivers critical resources to help the VA serve veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors as well as they have served our country — and it will allow the VA to continue providing more care, more services, and more benefits to more veterans than any time in its history.

In outlining his [Unity Agenda](#), the president identified supporting veterans as a key priority. His budget request supports the importance of ensuring veterans have timely access to high quality services and benefits.

To fulfill this promise, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' total FY 2023 request is \$301.4 billion, an 10.6% increase above the 2022 Enacted Budget (with rescissions). This includes a discretionary request of \$139.1 billion (with medical care collections), an 18.8% increase above the 2022 Enacted Budget (with rescissions). The 2023 mandatory funding request totals \$161.3 billion, an increase of \$5.1 billion or 3.3% above the 2022 Enacted Budget. The president's 2023 budget request for the VA includes:

- **Support VA medical care.** The budget provides \$122.7 billion (with collections), 21.3% above the 2022 enacted budget, to meet the medical needs of veterans. In addition to fully funding inpatient, outpatient, mental health and long-term care services, it supports programs that improve the VA health care quality and delivery, including investments in training programs for clinicians, health professionals and medical students. The budget also further supports the VA's preparedness for regional and national public health emergencies.
- **Improve veterans' mental health care services.** The budget provides \$13.9 billion for VA mental health care, which offers a system of comprehensive treatments and services to meet the needs of each veteran and the family members involved in the veteran's care. Consistent with the president's vision for addressing the national mental health crisis, it focuses on increasing timely access to quality mental health care and lowering the cost of mental health services for veterans, with the goal of helping Veterans take charge of their treatment and live full and meaningful lives.
- **Prioritize veteran suicide prevention.** The president made reducing military and veteran suicide a priority and strengthening veteran suicide prevention is a top clinical priority for the secretary. To help address these priorities, the budget provides \$497 million to support the administration's veteran suicide prevention initiatives, including implementation of: the Veterans Crisis Line's 988 expansion initiative (a new national three-digit emergency telephone number to access crisis call centers across the country for suicide prevention); increased focus on suicide prevention public health efforts in communities, a lethal means safety campaign; and the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program to enhance community-based prevention strategies.
- **Increase women veterans' health care.** The budget invests \$9.8 billion for all of women veterans' health care, including \$767 million towards women's gender specific care. More women are choosing VA health care than ever before, with women accounting for over 30% of the increase in veterans enrolled over the past five years. Investments support comprehensive specialty medical and surgical services for women veterans. Additionally, the VA proposes to increase access to infertility counseling and assisted reproductive technology and to eliminate copayments for contraceptive coverage. It also improves the safety of women veterans by supporting implementation of the zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment and assault at VA facilities.
- **Address environmental exposures.** The budget increases resources for hiring additional claims processors and advancing claims automation and modernization efforts to speed processing new presumptive disability compensation claims related to environmental exposures during military service. It also invests \$51 million within VA research programs and \$63 million within the VA medical care program to increase scientific understanding of and clinical support for veterans and health care providers regarding the potential adverse impacts from environmental exposures during military service.

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VA FY2023 BUDGET (CONTINUED)

- **Support cancer moonshot and precision oncology.** The budget invests \$81 million in research and \$167 million in medical care funds for precision oncology to provide the best possible cancer care for veterans and support the [cancer moonshot's](#) goal to end cancer as we know it today. Funds support research and programs that address cancer care, rare cancers and cancers in women, as well as genetic counseling and consultation that advance tele-oncology and precision oncology care.
- **Invest in human infrastructure.** This budget will allow us to invest in people and technology to improve the hiring experience for applicants, managers, and HR professionals; support an additional 28,963 Full Time Equivalent personnel; develop and implement staffing models throughout the VA; promote strong labor relations with our national unions; and lead our post-pandemic occupational safety and health planning and programs.

Visit [VA Budget Office](#) or [FY 2023 Budget](#) for more information.

VA PAWS ACT PILOT PROGRAM

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs published a Federal Register Notice, Wednesday, March 30, on its plan for implementing the pilot program required by the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers for Veterans Therapy Act.

The [PAWS Act](#), signed into law Aug. 25, 2021, requires the VA to conduct a five-year pilot program to provide canine training to eligible veterans diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder as an element of a complementary and integrative health program.

“Our pilot will help us explore the benefits of service dog training and give us the data we need to make recommendations to Congress on the way forward,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “There are many effective treatments for PTSD and we’re looking at service dog training as an adjunct to those options to ensure veterans have access to resources that may improve their well-being and help them thrive.”

Veterans participating in the program will have the opportunity to train potential future service dogs with the goal of helping veterans manage their PTSD symptoms.

The pilot program will be offered at the following five VA medical centers: Anchorage, AK; Asheville, NC; Palo Alto, CA; San Antonio, TX; and West Palm Beach, FL.

Clinicians at the pilot sites will determine the eligibility of veterans interested in the pilot program. Agreements with the participating organizations that will furnish the training have not yet been finalized.

HOWARD WOOD RELAY VETERANS APPRECIATION

The Howard Wood Dakota Relays has established a MILITARY ENTRANCE at the front gates of Howard Wood Field in Sioux Falls to allow members and former members of the National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, active components, and all veterans to be admitted free.

The Dakota Relays are on Friday and Saturday, May 6th and May 7th at Howard Wood Field. Field events begin at 11:00 AM Friday with running events beginning at 2:00 PM on Friday and 9:00 AM Saturday morning. The final events will be held at 6:30 PM Saturday evening.

This invitation is being extended to all the above and their immediate families. All veterans or service members need to do is identify themselves at the gate, and they will be admitted without question. ID cards are not necessary.

97TH ANNUAL HOWARD WOOD DAKOTA RELAYS

May 6 - May 7, 2022
Sioux Falls, SD



VAN BEEK NAMED CEO OF MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT

Aaron Van Beek, founder of Midwest Honor Flight, was recently named the first-ever president and CEO.

Van Beek pioneered Midwest Honor Flight when he was a junior at Dordt University.

He has successfully organized and executed eight honor flight missions while honoring over 700 veterans, as well as organized and participated in hundreds of fundraising events.

Aaron was instrumental in coordinating the sponsorship for the Wreaths Across America at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery.

To learn more about Midwest Honor Flight, visit: <https://www.midwesthonorflight.org/>.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Apr 4—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—(20901 Pleasant Valley Dr)—Sturgis—9:00 am (MT)
- Apr 6—Groundbreaking Ceremony for Gold Star Families Memorial Monument—(Veterans Memorial Park)—Sioux Falls—3:30 pm (CT)
- Apr 8—Purple Up for Military Children
- Apr 8-10—DAV of South Dakota State Convention—Rushmore Hotel and Suites (445 Mt. Rushmore Road)—Rapid City
- Apr 15-18—State Offices Closed
- Apr 20—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Military Heritage Alliance Building—Spirit of America Room—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)
- May 10—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pennington County Conference Room in the Care Building in Rapid City (321 Kansas City Street)—10:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
- May 11—SDDVA Mini Conference—American Legion Post 8 Cabin in Pierre (520 S. Pierre Street)—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
- May 12—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings City Library—Cooper Room (513 3rd Street)—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)
- May 14—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 9
- May 14—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 9 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—Doors open at 7:30 pm and program at 9:00 pm (CT)
- May 14-15—Ellsworth AFB Air Show
- May 30—Memorial Day Program—SD Veterans Cemetery (25965 477th Avenue)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
- May 30—Memorial Day Program—Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home—(2500 Minnekahta Avenue)—Hot Springs—10:00 am (MT)
- May 30—State Offices Closed
- Jun 1—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 10
- Jun 1—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 10 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—Doors open at 7:30 pm and program at 9:00 pm (CT)
- Jun 9-12—State VFW Convention—4-H Fairgrounds (3200 W Havens Avenue)—Mitchell
- Jun 12—Midwest Honor Flight Annual Honor Ride—SD Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls
- Jun 16-19—State American Legion Conference—Watertown
- Jun 18—Midwest Honor Flight 3rd Reunion—Sioux Falls Convention Center—11:00 am (CT)
- Jun 25—Lake County Abate Poker Run for Midwest Honor Flight
- Jul 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—(20901 Pleasant Valley Dr)—Sturgis—9:00 am (MT)
- Jul 18-23—National Veterans Golden Age Games—Sioux Falls



UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug 6-9—DAV National Convention—Orlando, FL
Aug 14-19—Military Order of the Purple Heart National Convention—Rapid City
Aug 15-17—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School
Aug 18-23—USS Iowa Veterans Association Reunion—Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center—Rapid City
Aug 22—The Barrel House Day of Giving fundraiser for Midwest Honor Flight—Sioux Falls
Sep 1—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair
Sep 1-5—South Dakota State Fair
Sep 10—Heroes Helping with Horsepower Military Appreciation Event—W. Main Street—Ethan—Festivities begin at 8:00 am (CT)
Oct 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—(20901 Pleasant Valley Dr)—Sturgis—9:00 am (MT)
Oct 15—Midwest Honor Flight Fifth Annual Hangar Dance—SD Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm (CT)
Dec 17—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)

UPCOMING EVENTS

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